

# MORE ON PERFINS OF GREAT BRITAIN — by Mike J. Burrows

## RIGHT OR WRONG?

In the catalog of the Perfins of Great Britain, compiled and edited by Robert McKee and Basil Tomkins, can be found the following entry:

541 BOLT/B 13,10,7,7/13 4½mm Wilkinson & Riddell (Bristol) Ltd.



For quite some time the explanation for this usage has been that, instead of using initials, the firm used a full-name telegraphic address Perfin.

This type of usage is not all that uncommon. At least six other companies in the United Kingdom are known to have used this method of identification.

The historical details of the firm in question are: registered 3 November 1897 as Bolt Bros Ltd, this company of wholesale drapers and warehousemen was formed to acquire the business of Boult Brothers, who were located in Bristol.

Meanwhile, over in Birmingham, another company, Wilkinson & Riddell Limited, had been floated to look after the interests of Wilkinson & Riddell, the textile and manufacturing merchants. This had taken place on 12 February 1892.

By 1913, the company of Bolt Bros. Ltd., had been taken over by Wilkinson & Riddell Limited. The name of Bolt Bros Ltd changing to that given in the catalog.

In the study of full-names at present being conducted by S.E.P.S. of Great Britain, the only stamps recorded so far are:

KGVII ½d. 1d.  
KGV ½d.

The only postmarked copy is a KGVII ½d. dated 5 JA 1910.

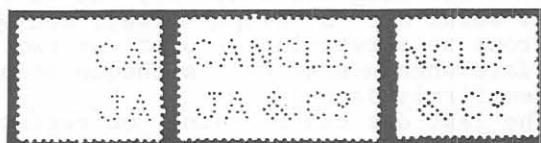
So the question remains, although Wilkinson & Riddell (Bristol) Ltd., retained the telegraphic address BOLT, BRISTOL, does the identity need changing to Bolt Bros. Ltd? Bearing in mind that up to the present time no issues are known with this Perfin after the takeover in 1913.

## G.B. FISCAL HELPS SOLVE PUZZLE

It is a fact that throughout the membership only a few are interested in Perfins on fiscals. Whilst getting a batch of Perfinned fiscals ready for photographing a chord was struck.

In the Great Britain illustrated catalog is an illustration that needs a little ex-

plaining. Take a look at page C-6 die C26 and you will see what I mean.



On checking the fiscal Perfin with the catalog illustration it was found that it tallied. In fact, the catalog lists a partial Perfin. After a search, a postal issue, a QV 2½d., plate 22, was located which matched the catalog illustration.

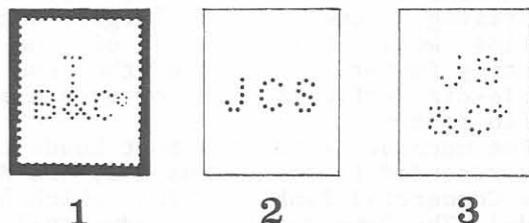
But what of the missing portion? Did the other half exist or was it a case of using the partial Perfin for the postage issues?

The next place worth a look was the pages of the Van Lint catalog. Which, although published many years ago, offers a wealth of very useful photographs. Yes! On page, or rather plate, A, there it was. Has anyone got this on a postal issue of the period 1880-85?

The fiscal mentioned above is cancelled with a rubber stamp of J. ALLARD & CO. The 2½d. plate 22, is postmarked LOMBARD ST. B.O.E.C. for JA 19 83. This post office, situated in London, was in what could be described as the centre of the banking and commercial world. Which might be the calling of the Perfin user. So far, all attempts at identification have drawn a blank.

## CLOSE CONNECTIONS

Take a look at the three Perfins illustrated. What have they got in common?



Well, for a start, they are all Sloper dies ranging over 70 years. Also they were used by Slopers themselves.

The first die was the sample that Slopers showed to prospective customers and is known to exist on 1d. plate numbers in varying sized mint blocks as well as single used examples. Whether or not it was allocated to a customer I have not been able to find out. My own example is from plate 145 and has a London postmark.

Die 2 can be found on 1d. lilac issues. This same die is reproduced in Kelly's Post Office London Directory for 1910. In this Sloper advertisement can be found the following (continued on page 4)

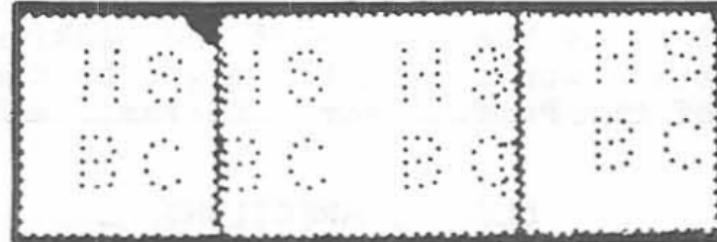
lowing: "postage and other stamps perforated with initials. Inventors of the system. Orders executed at one day's notice. Receipt stamps overprinted. Established 50 years. 20 King William St. EC & Tower Royal Works NW." J. Sloper always seemed to be prone to stretching a point or two. Is the date when he started his cheque security system firmly dated?

The last die can be found on registered envelopes that presumably Slopers sent the Perfins to their clients in. The address of Messrs. J. Sloper & Co. Ltd on the 1946 (year, not number) registered envelope that I have seen is given as New Bridge Street House, New Bridge St., E.C.4.

A similar die to the last is known used on postage stamps originating from Slopers.

#### AN OBSERVATION ON THE CHINESE HS/BC AND MULTI-HEAD MACHINES

It is often the case that it is amongst the more common Perfins that interesting varieties can be discovered. To show what I mean, take a look at the centre stamp in the illustration below. Both the dies show different characteristics. The best probably being readily seen in the S in the middle bar of the B. On either side can be seen a single of the repetitive Perfin.



Whilst each is very collectable, it is almost certain that both come from the same multi-head machine. Which is not really surprising. Some of the largest users of Perfins would not, because of the time/quantity factor, entertain the use of a single-die Perfin machine, or even a single Perfin machine.

The machine with the most heads that I have recorded is the one used by the Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB/M) which had 51 heads! The Commercial Bank, who confirm the 51 heads, foolishly, at least from a Perfin collector's point of view, destroyed the machine when they moved premises some years ago. A leading collector of Mauritius issues thinks that the format was 3x17. To Perfin a sheet of 12x20 or 10x20 stamps, this would mean a rather clumsy operation, but not impossible. It being possible to Perfin a 12x20 sheet in 5 strokes. But against this, all the large commemoratives I have seen have only one Perfin on each stamp.

U.S.A.: The largest multi-head Perfin machine that I have noted (via the Bulletin) is the Cummins Model 53 or 56. Both 10-die models.